



**Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District**  
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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 28, 2009**

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**HESPERIA EDUCATOR AWARDED AIR DISTRICT'S HIGHEST HONOR**

Victorville – A veteran 19-year Hesperia educator was recognized today for leading his students in saving more than \$160,000 in energy costs while helping to persuade his school board to return 50% of the savings back to the school, as the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District presented its thirteenth annual *Exemplar Awards* during its monthly Governing Board meeting in Victorville.

Mark Ziesmer, Science Department Head at Sultana High School, received the MDAQMD's highest honor for bringing the Green Schools Program – a comprehensive K-12 program that engages students in real-world learning projects which encourage energy conservation, benefit the environment and save money for school districts – to the Hesperia campus in 2002. Green Schools is a program of the Alliance to Save Energy which is funded by Southern California Edison, under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission and the California State & Consumer Services Agency.

Since joining the program, SHS Green School students have led their school in saving more than \$160,000 and over 1,000,000 kWh - the equivalent of preventing approximately 800,000 lbs of carbon dioxide, a primary greenhouse gas – from entering the atmosphere. In 2008 alone, SHS saved over \$13,000 while using 110,000 kWh less than the previous year and reducing 60 tons of greenhouse gases. These

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savings were achieved through an on-campus energy savings program spearheaded by Ziesmer and his students, which included such activities as plugging computers and TVs into timed power strips, pasting “Use Half Lights” stickers by light switches in classrooms to remind teachers to turn on only half of the ceiling lights, when sufficient, and through the coordination of a CFL-for-Incandescent light bulb exchange, which distributed 500 compact fluorescent lamps.

In recent years, SHS’s Green Schools Club has provided energy management training to six other schools within the Hesperia Unified School District, which have in turn, launched Green School programs on their own campuses.

Perhaps most important in these days of cash-strapped school districts, Ziesmer and his Green School students were instrumental in persuading the HUSD Board to return half of the schools’ energy savings back to participating Green Schools. As a result, Green Schools in Hesperia – including SHS – have been able to purchase desperately needed computer and school equipment which might have been otherwise unattainable.

The *Exemplar* Awards recognize High Desert entities that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to clean air through the development of voluntary activities/projects that reduce or prevent air pollution within the MDAQMD’s jurisdiction, which encompasses San Bernardino County’s High Desert and Riverside County’s Palo Verde Valley. The *Exemplar* Awards are presented annually by the local regulatory air agency in association with National Pollution Prevention Week.

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